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REPORTS SERVICE

THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC TODAY

Part I: The Liberation of Egypt

by Charles F. Gallagher

Cairo
January 8, 1960

The transition from the rugged coast of the Levant across a choppy winter sea to the shores of Egypt is abrupt and the change of scene total. By plane it is scarcely more than an hour after leaving Beirut before the first sighting is made of the long sandbanks which divide the waves of the Mediterranean from the still waters of the countless inland lagoons into which a weary, muddy Nile has emptied itself at the end of its long odyssey from tropical Africa.

The thin, gray sliver stretching out on the left is Suez, still the alimentary canal of an oil-dependent world. Directly below is a checkerboard landscape of green fertility and mud-brown villages, floating like lotus flowers in a giant pond whose triangular shape can just be made out--the Delta--the perennial breadbasket of Egypt, as flat as the stomachs of the spare fellahin who overinhabit and overwork it. To the right, on the far horizon, an almost imperceptible yellow haze frames the other end of the picture, completing the trio of forces of man and nature which have shaped modern Egypt: the river with its rich siltlands, the canal which brought the world to Egypt's doorstep, and everywhere else the desert.

The startling change in physical geography is paralleled by the human contrasts within these distinct regions of the Arab world. Each landscape

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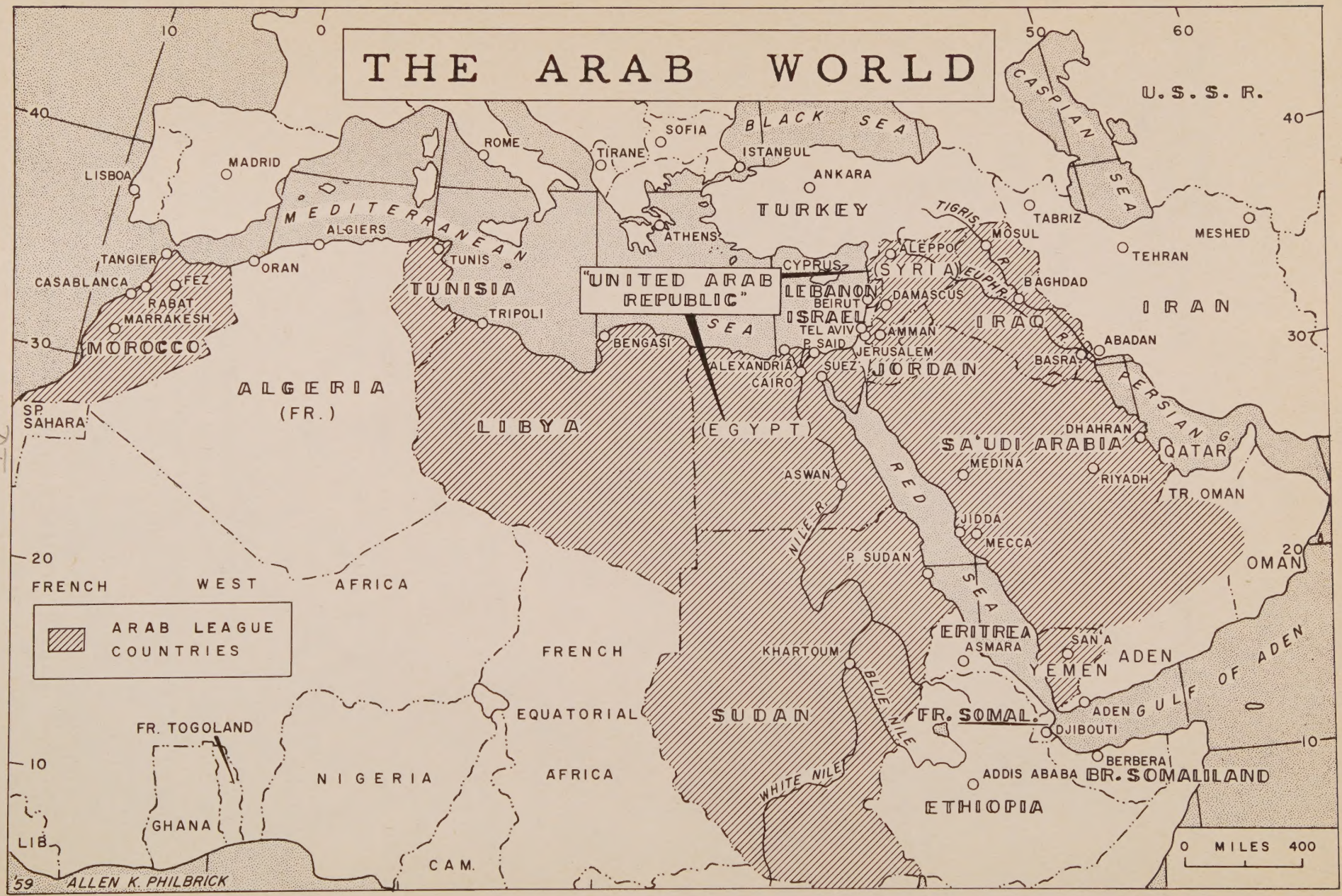
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in its way reflects its society. The rough peaks of the coastal ranges from Latakia to Tyre, the shadowed valleys between them, and the semiarid plateaus and steppeland lying behind, have formed a distinct type of Arab, recognizable as such within an enormous diversity whether he be Levantine or Bedouin, mountain villager or desert tribesman, 'Alawite, Kurd, Circassian, Muslim, Christian, Sunni, Shi'a, Druze, or whatever. Recognizable as such for an attitude of vigorous, brash self-confidence, dour pride and excessive sensitivity, and an often anarchistic ungovernability--the cultural Arab of the Fertile Crescent.

How much harder to define is the lumpy clay from which the great bulk of the Egyptians of the villages and fields have been molded. Like their land they are without relief or sharp feature, their costume and accent are more drab, and their skins tend to blend inconspicuously with the earth about them. Placid as the waters which nourish them, patient to an extreme beyond which it is unwise to push them, and plodding through the unending toil of extracting a living from the minute area in which they have flourished for five thousand years. But this is only one aspect of them. They mirror another side in the easy majesty of their movement, the dignity in which their poverty is clothed, by no matter what combination of outlandish rags, and in the soft anonymity with which time has mantled impartially the monuments of antiquity and their builders, and now bestows on the farmers and countrypeople who are their descendants.

Whether looking at Egypt through the glass of ancient history or of modern economics, it is constantly this mass that one is conscious of rather than the person. Egyptian crowds, even in Cairo, seem so much less made up of fiercely egoistic human units than those in Damascus, Beirut, or Amman. And it is this sense of endless indivisibility which links present-day Egypt, for all its Arabness and its Arabism (and the two are not at all the same), to its own past with a slender thread of timeless integrity, just as it somewhat separates it from the rest of the Arab countries and puts it in a perspective perhaps more meaningful in our time, in which the struggles of collective man are acquiring an ever-growing ascendance over those of the individual.

If Egypt is considered from this optic, several important consequences arise. The first and most serious of these is the conflict which is set up between Egypt as a continuous culture area with a largely homogeneous population and a strong sense of nationhood, and Egypt as the heartland of the United Arab Republic, as the moral and intellectual center of the Arab community, and the spiritual fount of Islam. Another consequence is the severity and the uniqueness of the economic and social problems which beset modern Egypt, and which have driven it into political patterns which may or may not be suitable for export, voluntary or involuntary, to other Arab states or to various nations of Asia and Africa who have in the recent past admired many of the attitudes of the Egyptian Government on questions of vital national interest. These grave economic conditions, in their turn, present the world with the

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problem of Egypt as one of the key test cases in economic development; and the question of who is going to help under what conditions, as illustrated poignantly by the history of Aswan Dam negotiations since 1955, is something which has already preoccupied the international political scene and will likely continue to for some time to come.

Each facet of these conflicting positions in which Egypt is found requires comment, although it is far from certain that clear answers can be given in all cases. Egypt has moved far and fast in many different directions under the new regime established by the revolution of July 1952. Now on the threshold of a new decade, under a leadership more mature and relaxed in the application of its power, it stands poised for what may well be some remarkable economic advances and social changes. This series of reports is an attempt to explain briefly how the country came to this point of departure and what its prospects are for the future.

* * * * *

The Egyptian revolution is now in its eighth year. The regime has had its ups and downs; at times, particularly in the beginning, its popularity waxed or waned for relatively minor, emotional reasons. At others it has captured the imagination of the people with what were hailed by them as reckless, bold, heroic acts--such were, for Egyptians and most Arabs, the nationalization of the canal in 1956, the arms purchases from Czechoslovakia in September 1955, and the announcement of union with Syria in the spring of 1958. Some of its accomplishments of lasting value have gone almost unnoticed except by a handful of educated Egyptians and foreign specialists: improvements in health standards, school construction and the concentration on education, remedial labor laws and increased social security. Others, like the agrarian reform, while generally appreciated, were not sweeping enough to cause passionate demonstration.

With the benefit of hindsight, however, it is clear that from the outset the revolution had several principal goals which were sharply enough defined to insure that many of the political crises of succeeding years would occur inevitably rather than accidentally. The first of these was the complete and final achievement of national independence, to be attained through the removal of British political control, however indirect and tenuous, and the physical eviction of British military forces from the Suez Canal area. This first goal was closely associated with the second, which was the "purification" of the nation through internal reforms and the ending of the corruption in court and government circles which had so shamed the country during the Palestine War in 1948. In the eyes of the nationalist officers around Naguib and Nasser this could not be done without eliminating the foreign power which had itself "corrupted the corrupters." Even in his conversations before World War II, Nasser lumped together as objects of disdain the foreign occupier, the monarchy, and the corrupt, feudal social system of Egypt. In his eyes

there was an interlocking, equal guilt borne by all of them.

Following upon these goals came the desire to establish, through the constituting of a strong, respectable, and self-proud state, a framework for greater unity among the various countries of the Arab community from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf. Before any kind of unity could be envisaged, however, independence must come. And since several of the Arab countries now free were then still under foreign control (Morocco, Sudan, and Tunisia), and others were considered by the revolutionary government to be indirectly dominated by a foreign power manipulating the same kind of rotten ruling classes who had just been eased out of power in Egypt, the new regime was fatally brought into conflict with Britain and France on the one hand as it incited the Arab peoples of their colonies and protectorates to rebellion, and with those Arab governments (Iraq and Jordan in particular) associated with them.

The final, overriding goal, viewed in the early years of the revolution (but not necessarily now) as realizable only after all the other preconditions had been met, was the establishment of a new social order for Egypt and, by extension and attraction, all the Arabs. This meant the elimination of feudalism and the archaic social legacy of the Ottoman Empire, the development of industry and agriculture, the spread of mass education--in short, to Arab leaders, the revival of the Arab world and a restoration to it of the glories of its past after what was felt as a long period of humiliation and debasement at the hands of the West.

These objectives were not new in terms of Egyptian-Arab nationalism, for they had been outlined by Egyptian writers and patriots for at least half a century; nor were they confined to Egypt. Ever since World War I Arab thought throughout the Middle East had been coalescing around these principles which were given further stimulus by the disastrous results of the Palestine War. The series of military coups in Syria beginning in 1949, the assassination of King Abdullah of Jordan in 1951, indeed, every major political event in the Middle East since World War II had as its logical underpinning this same general area of aspirations. The difference lay in the fact that the colonels in Syria, and the embittered killer of the Hashimite monarch in Jerusalem were not men who could seize the imagination of Arabdom. They were not the right men in the right country, but the Free Officers who formed the Revolutionary Command Council were, in large measure because what happened in Syria and Jordan was peripheral, but what happened in Egypt was central to the development of Arab nationalism. With the advent to power of the Nasserite group a page in Arab history was turned, and it is not only Egypt but all of the Arab world which can never be the same again as it was before 1952. As one Middle Eastern scholar put it:

> I believe that in the perspective of history the Egyptian revolution will be to the Middle East what the French revolution was

> to Europe. It, too, had its self-seeking leaders, its power cliques, its political nationalism; but it let loose forces that finally changed the pattern of social life in most of Europe. That is what the Egyptian revolution has begun to do in the Middle East and that is why it strikes fire in some form in every country. (John S. Badeau, "The Middle East: Conflict in Priorities," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 36, No. 2, January 1958, p. 240.)

It has been noted that most of the goals of the new regime clashed with the interests of the Western powers, essentially Britain and France. Furthermore the rough order which the revolutionary leaders assigned to their tasks gave priority to the problem of national independence and the elimination of "colonialism" from Egypt. This makes it logical to discuss first development and change in the revolution in terms of its international repercussions, in trying to trace the tenuous path which has been followed toward the positive neutralism which the United Arab Republic has arrived at today, and which is certainly the most markedly successful feature of the foreign policy of the Nasser Government in 1960.

For Egyptians every year since the beginning of the revolution has been an eventful one; for the rest of the world most of these years have seen at least one crisis of international magnitude revolving around the controversial government in Cairo. The years 1953 and 1954 were hectic ones of negotiations, broken off, renewed, and rebroken, over the Sudan question and the evacuation of British forces from the Suez Canal. The Sudan question (which will be discussed in a later report on the inter-Arab relations of the United Arab Republic) was finally settled by the Sudanese themselves, but the basic agreement for British withdrawal from the Canal Zone was finally signed after much haggling in July 1954. This date marked the end of the first period of the revolution, in which it had attained at least the first part of the primary goal it had advanced for itself.

Internally these first two years or so had been marked by the enracination of the regime, now under the leadership of Colonel Nasser, as a permanent force within the country. The Wafd party was eliminated, General Naguib had been discredited as a tepid, figurehead leader of the revolution unwilling to proceed along the radical lines desired by Nasser and his closest associates who controlled the Revolutionary Command Council. The dynasty founded by Muhammad Ali was as dead and disgraced as that of the Romanoffs, and the republic, in an as yet undecided form, was here to stay. Land reform had been used to break the strength of the rich, feudal supporters of the ancien régime, and by the time Nasser was definitively installed in power in mid-1954 the armed forces and police had been purged and were solidly in his hands. He was at this juncture, however, still a transient military figure ruling a military state in transition. He was young and inexperienced, without an expressed ideology which could be communicated to the people, and there were still two groups with definite platforms and powerful organization within

the country who gave him reason to worry: the Muslim Brotherhood and the Communists. Apart from minor crackdowns on Communist supporters in 1953 and 1954, he had taken little action against them before relations with the Eastern bloc began to improve; they were not considered dangerous enough at the time, and later they became almost fashionable. Communists never really flourished as such, however, and there was an ambivalence in their attitudes and acts even at the height of the honeymoon with the Soviet Union. It was not, in any case, until much later that serious measures were taken against them.

The case of the Muslim Brotherhood was different. It was a well-organized and powerful association having contacts throughout the army and it had been on the closest terms with the Free Officers in the first days of the revolution. The reduction of this Right-wing extremist group was forced upon Nasser when it began to sabotage by terrorism the negotiations he was conducting with the British regarding evacuation. To the Government there was considerable evidence at this time of collusion between the Brotherhood and the Communists in a plot to overthrow Nasser. During the summer of 1954 Nasser drove hard against the Brotherhood and in October he was given an opportunity to destroy its organization when an attempt was made on his life in Alexandria. Several thousand members were rounded up, and in the trials that followed, the leaders were given little mercy. The execution of two members of the Supreme Guidance Council, along with others who had participated directly in the assassination plot (one of the few occasions when the bloodless revolution violated its principles), consolidated Nasser's power by removing his Right-wing opponents, just as the arrests of the Communists, on a smaller scale, had eliminated those on the Left.

The period following this internal consolidation, from mid-1954 until the attack on Suez in October 1956, was that in which Nasser emerged as a leading actor on the world political stage. This was perhaps less the result of his ambition than it was due to the counterpressures being exerted against the new regime throughout the Middle East by external forces, in the name of the famous vacuum theory. This theme was popularized in the West at the time of the British withdrawal, and according to it the absence of stable power in the area, by which was meant Western military power, condemned the Middle East to the danger and even probability of anarchy and Communist penetration. Disguised in a variety of shapes it existed through the Richards Mission, the Eisenhower Doctrine, and the landings in Lebanon in 1958, but it seems mercifully to have been laid at rest in the last year. Soviet policy in the Middle East had, it is true, been patiently alert for some time to any and all possibilities of infiltration, but there was very little that the USSR needed to do which was not being done for it by the West. As the Arabs were quick to point out, the powers seeking most desperately to fill the alleged vacuum were precisely those who had created the idea of it in the first place, i.e., the "imperialist West" or Israel, which was in Arab eyes the "creature of imperialism."

Specifically there were two events early in 1955 which turned relations between the revolutionary regime in Egypt and the West into the path which ended in the tragedy at Suez. The first was the Turco-Iraqi pact, signed in January with the blessing of the British Foreign Office, and to which Britain shortly adhered under the name of the Baghdad Pact. In it, Colonel Nasser saw a duplicitous attempt by Britain to re-establish elsewhere in the Arab world the position from which it had been ousted at Suez. In addition, he suspected a not too subtle effort to isolate Egypt from its sister Arab states in the open British invitation, addressed to all other Arab countries, to join the defense arrangement.

Almost contemporary to this was the powerful Israeli reprisal raid on the Egyptian post of Khan Yunis in the Gaza strip in February. Israel contended that this kind of massive retaliation was the only means of stopping the constant border harassments which, it claimed, were instigated by the Egyptian Government using the Palestinian refugees. (This was before the first fedayin raids, it should be noted.) To Nasser, the attack was a testing in force of Egyptian strength, and now that Egypt was about to be stripped of British forces in the Canal Zone, a threat and a warning. Egypt, like all Arab states in the area, had considered it inevitable that Israel would seek to expand by force some day and this assault, carried out under the new policy of force inaugurated by Ben-Gurion on his return to the Government, went a long way toward convincing the Egyptian Government that serious trouble was imminent--trouble for which it was not prepared.

Put together the two events reinforced the belief in Nasser that his principal enemies, Britain and Israel, were determined to get rid of him one way or another, and that countermeasures were called for. He accordingly fashioned a threefold response to the situation. First, after some days hesitation, he attacked in unusually violent terms the Iraqi regime for selling itself and the Arab community into a new kind of bondage to the West. "No pacts except those between Arab states," was a motto so successfully propagated by Radio Cairo that it was soon Iraq which was quarantined within the Arab world.

Next, Nasser set out to woo the support of influential neutral leaders in the rest of the world. The attraction was more or less mutual at this point, for men like Nehru and Tito were more than anxious to find recruits to their cause of nonalignment at a time when the tensions of the cold war were still in the post-Stalin, pre-Geneva stage. Egypt began to receive visits by heads of government and prominent neutrals who admired the independent policy of Nasserism, and Nasser himself made his first trip outside the Middle East when he traveled to the Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian States in April 1955. His outlook changed enormously. Received warmly in India and Burma, genuinely respected by such figures as Sukarno and U Nu, and carefully flattered by Chou En-lai and the Communist group, Nasser took a long step away from the West and toward what he imagined was even greater independence. He had become aware of his own stature in the world and of the enhanced

importance accorded to Egypt in the mid-'50's, mostly as a result of his policies.

When Nasser returned home from Bandung an international statesman in Egyptian and Arab eyes, the stage was set for the third, and most dramatic, reaction to Western policy in the Middle East. As relations between his regime and the West became constantly cooler, misunderstandings multiplied; any slight semiofficial slip or press indiscretion became magnified into a source of umbrage. Long-standing Egyptian requests for arms, principally from the United States, to counterbalance Israeli strength as revealed in 1955 were hedged on. Nasser was no longer considered politically trustworthy, primarily in London and Paris, but increasingly so in Washington. And Cairo's unremitting suspicions that the Western powers planned somehow eventually to arrange the overthrowal of the regime were heightened by the tractations over weapons. It was bad enough that Nasser had been made a charter member of the neutralist club at a time when neutralism was considered immoral by the State Department, but when he began to warm up toward the Soviet bloc, commercially and culturally, in mid-1955, his stock went further downhill. After Khan Yunis, however, Egyptian pressure for arms increased sharply; to Nasser it was a matter of great urgency and, at the same time, a test of American attitudes toward him. But the American offers were associated with conditions unacceptable to him, such as the acceptance of military missions, and continuing efforts were made to entice Nasser back into a regional defense agreement, something which he manifestly could not accept in view of the virulence of his own radio attacks on Iraq for having committed this sin. Hints were thrown out that materiel would be had at any cost, but they were alternately ignored or thought to be blackmail which could not be effectively implemented.

It was in these circumstances that the purchase of arms from Czechoslovakia in return for cotton was announced. Relations with the Occident sagged to a new low, American officials put on a tawdry show of running after Nasser and asking him to reconsider. But success was breeding success and in his own world he was even more of a popular hero. Enthusiasm in Egypt hit a new high when the news was released and his popularity in other Arab countries, lukewarm in 1954 but on the upgrade since Bandung, began to overshadow even that of local political figures. Accordingly, consideration had to be given once more in London and Washington to the necessity of trying once again to treat with Nasser, always from a worsened bargaining position, or, more exactly, of buying him off. A real understanding of Nasserism as a fundamental force within Arab nationalism was never really attempted in those years, apart from the scattered cries of a few, unheeded voices in the State Department who were powerless to act. (In looking back at this period, one must try to remember the utterly unreal Western appraisal not only of the Middle East as such, regarded as a private Western sphere of influence, guarded by the Sixth Fleet, and guaranteed by the tripartite declaration on existing frontiers and the embargo on arms shipments, but of the

true balance of power in the world at the time. The most widespread fantasy that emerged in mid-'50's journalistic expertise as a result of these dual misconceptions was that the Soviet Union would not dare intervene openly in the Middle East, first, because it did not have the naval and air strength to deploy in the Mediterranean and, second, because in the long run, somehow, it knew its place and would abide by the Western rules which had written it out of the game.)

The issue selected by the West for its next round of bargaining was one which touched upon another fundamental goal of the revolution. Having by now quite effectively demonstrated his political independence of the West and being, thanks to Communist backing, in a fairly satisfactory military posture, Colonel Nasser decided to set about tackling Egypt's staggering economic problems by building the High Dam at Aswan, an essential for the extension of the cultivated area of Egypt and for further development of electric power for industrialization. The construction would need a good deal of foreign capital and feelers were put out to see who might be interested. It seems in retrospect that the regime would have preferred keeping the dam out of politics as much as possible. By its own definition of positive neutralism (unacceptable, of course, to the West then; it was still thinking of getting Nasser back into its camp) Egypt would logically have had no objection to accepting economic aid from the West to balance a situation in which a third of its trade was going to the Communist bloc to whom its cotton crop was heavily mortgaged in return for armaments.

It has never been clear, on the other hand, whether a firm offer was received at this time from the Soviet Union; it is quite likely that there was a verbal promise, or at least enough encouragement from Moscow to keep the fires going and to prepare the next imbroglio. In any event, the Egyptians were happy to leak to Western sources that the Soviets were prepared to finance the dam. They enjoyed showing that they were no longer dependent on the bounty of London and Washington, and they could explore the possibilities of getting a better arrangement with the West.

Alarmed at learning this, the West made an offer late in 1955, largely as an anti-Communist gambit and as a political move to hold the last shreds of the Western position in Egypt. The whole matter was not too preoccupying to the Western governments (Britain and America were associated with the World Bank in the offer in an interlocking way which made each offer dependent on the other) because the conditions attached to it concerning the necessary preagreement of riparian states on Nile water sharing were thought to preclude any immediate action. It must have seemed a cheap way to gain time and friends.

The Egyptians, however, either knowing how uncertain Russian support was in fact, or perhaps genuinely preferring multinational non-Communist assistance, were anxious to get on with the scheme--but as always, since the success of their neutralist policies had been so stunningly outlined to them,

on their own terms. Thus another round of misunderstandings got under way.

Negotiations were difficult in the climate of early 1956. Britain was irritated with Nasser for many reasons of policy: the telling attacks on the Baghdad Pact; the support given to anti-British nationalism in Jordan which resulted in the eviction of Glubb Pasha from command of the Arab Legion; the excesses of Cairo Radio in its broadcasts to colonial Black Africa; and the Egyptian policy of stirring up the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms and the Aden area. All of these infuriated the British at a time when they considered they were faithfully fulfilling all obligations to withdraw from Egypt as agreed. In America, Congressional opinion and Zionist pressures, particularly in an election year, made it unusually hard to give in to the least Egyptian arrogance. Fighting continued on the Israeli-Egyptian border and Nasser's position as the now acknowledged leader of the Arab world against Israel forced him to take a strong stand in the skirmishes. His creation of the fedayin commando groups using Soviet-supplied equipment was widely publicized as a Communist-Nasserite plot against Israel and the West. Finally, when in May the Egyptian Government did what the British had done six years before and recognized Communist China because of the greatly expanded trade with Peking, almost the last chance of coming to an arrangement with the United States was dispelled.

At this point positions became somewhat reversed. Rather alarmed by the standoffishness of the West, President Nasser (he had assumed the title after elections early in 1956) decided almost a little too precipitately, to accept the Western offer. But the Occident had become meanwhile almost certain the Russian offer was no longer firm. It now looked to them as if Nasser were beyond redemption and, especially in American politics, standing up for it began to be equated with political suicide. Both parties advanced into a tactical retreat. The Egyptian Ambassador in the United States announced prematurely on his way back to Washington that Egypt would accept the assistance, whereupon the United States, almost as if it had waited for an opportunity to administer a public rebuff, informed him that it was no longer interested. The ostensible reasons were that the Egyptian economy was incapable of supporting the burden of its own share of the project and that, furthermore, no agreement on water rights had been reached with other Nile states. When the American offer lapsed, those of Britain and the World Bank were automatically invalidated.

This was July 1956, and it was the beginning of the apogee of President Nasser's career in the role of principal non-Communist (although many were not sure of that) enemy of the West anywhere in the world. In fact, in the space of one short week his personality was blown up to that of an evil, despotic world dictator, mad with rage. He had just returned from a three-man conference with Nehru and Tito at Brioni, and a few days later, in a bitter anti-Western speech in which an altogether Arab emotional disappointment overflowed, he answered the American slap by announcing in melodramatic terms

the nationalization of the Suez Canal. This, he proudly explained to an audience which roared with jubilation and pride, would pay with its profits for the cost of the High Dam. The crowd went wild. Egypt was finally free--rid of the last British troops which had evacuated a short time before, free of dependence on the West, free of the groveling policy which all its previous masters had adopted vis-à-vis their foreign rulers, and free of the shame of foreign control of the Canal. Popular opinion was very sensitive to this last issue, for to Egyptians the canal had bled Egypt for nearly a century, physically with the blood of the workers who had built it under forced labor conditions and financially by the arrangements under which coupon-holders in Europe made fortunes while as late as 1949 the revised agreement allowed Egypt only seven per cent of Canal revenues. If Nasser was the villain of the year in the West, he was, according to the Arab press, the greatest hero since Saladin.

Thus, July 1956 marks another great turning point in the Egyptian revolution and in the development of Nasser as a leader. In a sense the period between July and the trination attack on Egypt in October was an anticlimax. It was another inevitable conclusion, given the temperament of the protagonists and the accumulated bitterness between Britain and France on the one hand and Egypt on the other. Battle positions were drawn on an issue on which both sides believed themselves completely justified. For a man of Nasser's army background and stubborn character, believing wholeheartedly in the righteousness of his cause, considering himself the hero who had brought a new dignity to his people--the hero who, in his own words, had found his role--there was no way out but to stand and fight if necessary. And what applied to him applied to Egypt as well; if it was worthy of the dignity which he had given it, it, too, must accept the challenge.

It was not that he considered nationalization a casus belli in itself, but he was convinced that Western policy makers had been searching for an excuse to attack him and that he had been forced to give it to them by the decision which he had taken as the only honorable one in his eyes. Legally a good case can be made out for nationalization, for there was not much doubt that the company was an Egyptian company subject to Egyptian laws. Moreover the takeover was carried out in due form and just compensation was promised. An excellent case was made for accommodation in the months of negotiating that ensued, inside the United Nations and out, and at times it looked as if moderation would prevail. But Nasser was right in understanding that if he stuck to his guns force would be used against him, and the real drama of Suez lies here, that one comes as close to historic inevitability as is possible when dealing with human beings and human emotions. It was a curious, triangular oddity, however, that England, which had understood the passive resistance of a great and proud society in India, was unwilling to comprehend the violent rejection of Egypt, another great and proud country, while Nehru and Nasser, so different in outlook and manner, saw eye-to-eye on almost all international problems.

That Nasser was not anxious for a military showdown, knowing as he

did that he was hopelessly inferior, is shown by the sober correctness with which he behaved after his first outburst in Alexandria, and by the absence of any inflammatory statements on his part. With the remarkable political acumen which has seen him through all his crises, he counted upon the abating of passions through dilatory conversations while he continued to run the Canal efficiently and smoothly. And if, finally, it was written that an attack would come, he relied upon international pressure and outside support to save him. The first tactic nearly succeeded, the second did.

The military aspects of the Suez invasion are so well known that they do not properly belong in this account which is attempting instead to define the background of Egyptian political objectives show how they were arrived at, and further indicate how their realization is now changing the personality of the leaders of the revolution and the country itself. All that needs be remembered is that, although support for canal nationalization was hesitant in many countries in August 1956 (even some Arab states were unsure at the beginning), as threats to Nasser increased support for him grew, and by the time the Anglo-French-Israeli forces had been brought to a halt by a combination of United Nations disapproval, United States separation from its allies, and Russian rocket threats to Britain and France, almost the entire world, and certainly every country from Morocco to Japan, was solid in opposition to the invasion.

The Egyptian regime had been militarily routed and discredited, with much of the materiel just purchased destroyed before it was paid for. The Canal on which Nasser had counted for revenue was blocked and useless to world shipping. Humiliated in the eyes of the world, but not in those of his own people or those of the Arabs who were uninformed or unwilling to hear of the military debacle, much of what Nasser had presumably stood for seemed to be in ashes at that moment. But, in reality, all was far from lost. It was the West which suffered much more. The strain on those who had believed in British fair play was equaled by the drain on sterling and the stresses within the Commonwealth. It was Europe which had to ration fuel that winter, but the economic losses to the subsistence economy on which most Egyptians lived was negligible. Suez marked the end of the privileged Anglo-French position in the Middle East after a hundred years and the bitterness has still not disappeared.

As he looked about him at the end of 1956, Nasser found that he had been supported to the hilt by his people. There had been no rising against him as confidently expected in London and Paris and he now had the Arab states firmly behind him. Under the cover of the United Nations Emergency Force, which spread a thin line of protection between him and his adversaries, he began, Phoenix-like, like Egypt itself, to rise from the ashes. His losses had been tactical and they could be replaced; but his victory had been strategic and he and his closest associates felt that their moral position was unassailable. The first objective of the revolution had been fully accomplished in seeming defeat, and to many it must have seemed a true miracle. Good progress had

been made toward the second objective, for the behavior of Egyptians during the invasion in standing by the regime and in scrupulously refraining from indiscriminate attacks on foreigners were signs of the stable, dignified, and proud country which the revolution had wanted to build. Now there were other goals to move on to, but other political temptations along the way. After Suez the question was in which direction revolutionary Egypt would move and what its principal focus would be in the next few years.

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